

**CONF 601, Theories of Conflict and Conflict Resolution, Fall  
2012 Section 002,  
Tuesday 7:20-10:00, Founders Hall 210**

“Justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought. A theory however elegant and economical must be rejected or revised if it is untrue; likewise laws and institutions no matter how efficient and well-arranged must be reformed or abolished if they are unjust.”

John Rawls *A Theory of Justice* 1971

**Objectives**

Welcome to CONF 601! This course is designed to explore a wide range of conceptual frameworks for analyzing and resolving social conflict. Our objectives include:

1. To become familiar with the range of classical social theories that have proven useful in analyzing various types of social conflict;
2. To identify and critique the structure of these classical arguments;
3. To enable students to develop concepts and theories of conflict and conflict resolution that will be useful in their own scholarship, practice and work life.

**Instructor and Office Hours**

This section of the course is taught by Solon Simmons, who can be reached at 703-993-3781 or [ssimmon5@gmu.edu](mailto:ssimmon5@gmu.edu). The instructor will be available for office hours on Tuesday between 6:30PM and 7:15 PM in Einstein's Bagel in Founder's Hall.

**Graded Exercises and Related Matters**

**Conceptual Handbook:** Grades in this course will be based on two exercises in which you will develop a conceptual handbook through which you explore the meaning of the various ideas we have used in class. In this handbook, you can rely upon any of the readings assigned, related readings that you have encountered in other classes and real world examples that help to illustrate your case. The first draft of the handbook is worth 20% of the grade and a refined version that is due at the end of class is worth 50%. Final handbooks should be roughly 25 pages in length and should cover those concepts that you take to be the most important for the field of conflict analysis and resolution.

In order to prepare for the handbooks, each student will be expected to present a concept diary at the beginning each class. This diary will be no more than a page in length and will capture the major concepts presented in any given work and all of the verbatim phrases and key words that author associates with them. The student will be responsible for turning in 10 of these concept diaries (ON TIME) and each one will account for 1% of the final grade. The remainder of the grade (20%) will be based on active participation in class discussion. Part of this participation is to act as a classroom facilitator for specific readings. These facilitation roles will be assigned each week prior to class.

The following criteria will be used to judge both drafts of the handbook:

- 1) Writing – Excellence will be assessed with respect to the overall quality of the writing and the general structure of the handbook. There is no fixed way to develop the handbook, but the student should be clear in developing a structure that works for him or her and in using that structure to maximum effect.
- 2) Concepts – Excellence will be assessed with respect to how well the student demonstrates familiarity and fluency in the use of the concepts developed in class. This will include attention to how words differ from things and how the signifiers we employ in daily life can be arbitrarily associated with the signified we mean to refer to.
- 3) Use – Excellence will be assessed with respect to how the concepts and definitions developed by the student are used in the essay itself. Here it is important to pull out key phrases that capture the idea in question and to attach the right thinker with the right context. Much of what we will do in class together is meant as a modeling exercise in how to develop good conceptual usage.
- 4) Development – Excellence will be assessed with respect to the quality of the arguments made in the conceptual essays. This criterion will capture the quality of your thinking as represented in the essay in a more conventional and less abstract sense than the previous two criteria do. Take time to develop and personal your own take on these ideas and relate, as far as is possible, to the work and practice you do and plan to do in the future. In other words, make the theories useful.

In order to receive a passing grade, it is necessary to attend classes prepared to discuss the week's reading. Late papers will be graded down one full grade for each day or part of a day that the paper is late, unless the student furnishes written documentation of the medical or family emergency which made timely completion of the work impossible. Please note that it is ICAR policy to refuse to grant grades of Incomplete for reasons other than documented medical or family emergencies. (For more information about grading, please look at the statement on academic standards in the ICAR Handbook and GMU's Honor Code.)

### **Course Materials**

Most of the articles and book chapters will be available online. Instructions will be given in class about access to these materials. Required reading materials are mandatory. The instructor will facilitate discussions in class based on the assumption that all students have read and reflected on all the required reading. These readings are meant to present the core arguments that help to define the complex field of conflict analysis and resolution, and many may support arguments with which you disagree. That is intentional in the class design. In addition, students are encouraged to follow and critically examine daily news reports on current events related to social conflict, for they will be discussed in class to supplement the assigned reading materials.

## Course Schedule

### **Week 1: August 28**

#### ***Introduction to the course***

This session will offer an overview of the course and explore why we need to study social theory for conflict analysis and resolution. No reading is assigned.

### **Week 2: September 4**

#### ***The Prince and the Polis***

Required reading

**Plato.** *The Republic* 380 BCE. Books 1 & 2

<http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/republic.html>

**Machiavelli.** *The Prince* 1532. Chapters XIV-XV, XVII- XVIII, XXV

<http://www.constitution.org/mac/prince00.htm>

### **Week 3: September 11**

#### ***Realism***

Required reading

**Thucydides.** 400 BCE “The Melian Dialogue.”

**Hobbes.** 1651. Chapter XIII “Of the Natural Condition of Mankind” in *Leviathan*

**James Madison.** 1788. *The Federalist* Nos. 10 & 51 (online)

**Hans J. Morgenthau.** 1967. *Politics among Nations*, 3-14, 25-35, and 162-171

### **Week 4: September 18**

#### ***Functionalism***

Required reading

**Bhagavad Gita** Circa 200 BCE- 200 CE. Chapter 18

<http://www.realization.org/page/namedoc0/gita/gita18.htm>

**Plato.** *The Republic*. Books 3 & 4

**Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore.** 1944. Some Principles of Stratification  
*American Sociological Review*, Vol. 10, No. 2

**Melvin M. Tumin.** 1953. Some Principles of Stratification: A Critical Analysis  
*American Sociological Review* Vol. 18, No. 4: 387–393

## Week 5: September 25

### *Tradition and Modernity*

Required reading:

**Edmund Burke** 1791. *Reflections on the Revolution in France*

**Talcott Parsons** and **Edward Shils**. 1951. *Toward a General Theory of Social Action* pp. 76-88.

**Anthony Giddens**. 1981. *Consequences of Modernity*.

**Benjamin Barber**. 1992. "Jihad vs. McWorld" in *The Atlantic Monthly*.

## Week 6: October 2

### *The Free and Rational Individual*

**John Locke** 1690. *Second Treatise on Government*.

**Immanuel Kant** 1784. *What is Enlightenment?*

**Alexis de Tocqueville**. 1835. *Democracy in America* pp.163-170, 246-261, 287-305, 503-517

**John Rawls**. 1972. *A Theory of Justice*

## Week 7: October 16 DRAFT HANDBOOK DUE

### *Capitalism the Market*

Required reading:

**Adam Smith**. *The Wealth of Nations* 1776. pp.7-17, 62-71.

**Karl Marx** and **Friedrich Engels**. 1848. *The Communist Manifesto*

**Max Weber**. 1953. "Class, Status and Party" in *Class, Status and Power* by Reinhard Bendix and Seymour Martin Lipset

**Karl Polanyi**. 1944. *The Great Transformation* pp.130-162, 249-258B

## Week 8: October 23

### *The Unconscious*

Required reading:

**Sigmund Freud**. 1900. *The Interpretation of Dreams*

**Karl Jung**. 1964. "Approaching the Unconscious" in *Man and his Symbols*

**Theodore Adorno**. 1951. "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda"

**Vamik Volkan**. 1997. *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism*.

**Jonathan Haidt**. 2001. The emotional dog and its rational tail: A social intuitionist approach to moral judgment. *Psychological Review*. 108, 814-834




## Week 9: October 30

### *Antifoundationalism – The Philosophy of '68*

Required reading:

**Ferdinand de Saussure.** 1916. *Course in General Linguistics*

**Roland Barthes.** 1974. "Death of the Author"

**Jean Baudrillard.** 1985. "The Precession of Simulacra" in *Simulation and Simulacra* pp. 1-41. 

**Michel Foucault.** 1975. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison.* pp. 3-31, 257-292.

**Jaques Derrida** 1974. *Structure, Sign and Play*

## Week 10: November 6

### *Identity*

Required reading:

**Sigmund Freud.** 1922. *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*

**Erik Erikson.** 1966. "The Concept of Identity in Race Relations" *Daedalus*

**Tajfel, Henri, and J. C. Turner.** 1979. "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict." In *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, edited by W. G. Austin and S. Worchel. Monterey, California: Brooks/Cole.

**Walter Benn Michaels.** 2006. "Who Are We, Why Should We Care?" in *The Trouble with Diversity* pp.141-170.

## Week 11: November 13

### *Structural Violence*

Required reading:

**Johan Galtung.** 1969. "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research* 6:3: 167-191.

**Erik Wright.** 1997. "Introduction" *Class Counts.*

**Michael Porter.** 2008. "The Five Competitive Forces That Shape Strategy," Harvard Business Review

## Week 12: November 20

### *Positions, Interests and Needs*

Required reading

**Roger Fisher and William L. Ury.** 1981. *Getting to Yes.* pp. 7-30

**John Burton.** 1979. *Deviance, Terrorism, and War: The Process of Solving Unresolved Social and Political Problems,* 55-84

**Kevin Avruch and Peter Black.** 1987. "A Generic Theory of Conflict Resolution: A Critique." *Negotiation Journal* January.

### **Week 13: November 27**

#### ***Culture, Habit and Power***

**Aristotle 350 BCE Nichomachean Ethics**

**Clifford Geertz.** 1973. "Thick description: toward an interpretive theory of culture", in: *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* Basic Books, pp. 3-30

**Pierre Bourdieu.** 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, in David Grusky, pp.499-525.

**Ann Swidler.** 1986. Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies. *American Sociological Review*, 51 (2), 273-286

**Jeffrey Alexander and Philip Smith** 2001. "The Strong Program in Cultural Sociology"  
<http://ccs.research.yale.edu/about/strong-program/>

### **Week 14: December 4**

#### **Narrative and Discourse**

**Jerome Bruner.** 1991. "The Narrative Construction of Reality" *Critical Inquiry*.

**John Winslade, Gerald Monk, and Alison Cotter.** 1998. "A Narrative Approach to the Practice of Mediation" *Negotiation Journal*. January

**Sara Cobb.** 1993. "Empowerment and Mediation. A Narrative Perspective"  
*Negotiation Journal* 9:3

**Solon Simmons.** 2012 "Civil Identity and Communicative Practice: The Rhetoric of Liberty in the United States" in Karyna Korostelina *Culture of Peace*.

**FINAL EXERCISE DUE AT THE INSTRUCTOR'S MAILBOX AT SCAR BY  
4:30 PM ON DECEMBER 11TH (Monday)**